



# Autism Developmental Approach Therapies Association

Spring 2018

## New Functional Developmental Autism Assessment Protocol

Families often come to DIR/Floortime to build healthy foundations for social, emotional & intellectual capacities rather than focusing on skills and isolated behaviours. The DIR Model outlines six basic core functional emotional developmental capacities that are foundational in human development.

To date there has been no comprehensive assessment process that describes an individual's Developmental capacities (D), Individual differences (I), and Relationships (R) to foster a holistic view of how to move forward. For the first time, **A Total Approach** in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania has all of the core pieces of an autism diagnosis included in one assessment process, which includes standardized measures, for a holistic view of the child.

What the family gets after the two-hour long assessment is a summary of each capacity and what's impeding each developmental stage. This gives the parents a picture of their journey and a road map to follow. Parents find it so much easier to comprehend the process.

To learn more, see the video podcast, catch the audio podcast, or read the blog **HERE**.

## New DIR Boarding & Day School in NY

Click **HERE** to learn about **Shrub Oak International School**, a community of like-minded professionals and peers who understand the struggles of their students. The school is a launching pad to help them take off into the world using a developmental approach on 127 acres of beautiful rolling fields and woods.



atotalapproach.com

## Autism D.A.T.A.'s Spring 2018 Bulletin

Welcome to the latest from the developmental approach perspective! This issue focuses on a new assessment protocol, a new developmental boarding school, new research, parent course, conferences, advocacy & podcast.

Please sign up at **autismDATA.org** to receive your copy via email and see past issues at **autismdata.org/bulletin**.

If you live in Ontario, Canada, please consider adding your name to our petition at **autismdata.org/petition** to see Developmental Approach therapies funded.

## New Research

A **study out of MIT** published in February's *Psychological Science* online found that back-and-forth exchanges between parent and child—that is, engaging children in conversation—is what boosts the brain's response to language. Floortime coaches parents how to do exactly this: increase the gestural communication that uses the sensory and motor systems to promote these circles of communication in “conversation” between parent & child.

A **recent study** investigated the effectiveness of a Developmental, Individual differences, Relationship-based (DIR) improvisational Music Therapy Program on social communication for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and found improvements in areas of self-regulation, engagement, behavioural organization, and two-way purposeful communication.

## Floortime Online Parent Course

The Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning (ICDL) will offer it's next **Building Floortime Families course**: An Introduction to DIR & DIR/Floortime for Parents and Caregivers (Live Online) Wednesdays from April 18 to May 23 at 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time.

Link to this bulletin online **HERE**.

Submissions for bulletin: [affectautism@gmail.com](mailto:affectautism@gmail.com)



## Recent Conferences

The 2017 21st Annual Interdisciplinary Council on Development and Learning (ICDL) **International DIR/Floortime Conference** met November 9 & 10 in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme was "A Pathway to Understanding and Engaging a Child with Autism" and the roster of speakers was a wonderful mix of regional and U.S.-based DIR practitioners and researchers:

- The meaning and importance of relationships in the Developmental, Individual differences, Relationship-based (DIR) model
- How we can engage and respect Autism
- Ways to manage difficult moments
- Empathy, video coding and the launching of the English edition of Dhamma and DIR
- Case examples of DIR in practice
- DIR in school and foster care settings

Dr. Kingkaew Pajareya and her hosting team in Thailand are dedicated to fostering & cultivating the DIR/Floortime vision. The next conference will be in Washington, D.C. on November 8 to 10.

The **Annual International Profectum Conference** was held in Newark, NJ, October 25 & 26, 2017. The theme was "Relationships: The Key to Progress". The focus on the conference was to bridge clinical and research models of Parent Mediated Intervention and to unlock potential for individuals with Autism and other mental health challenges. International DIR/Floortime professionals shared their work through 25 workshops that covered a the **Profectum Parent Toolbox** and a range of topics about working with very young to older children, adults and families in clinical, educational, and research settings:

- Fostering independence at early stages
- Communication systems
- Adults "letting go" to support transitions
- Family dynamics
- Setting short- and long-term goals
- Social thinking and reflective practice in homes, clinics and classrooms

The next conference will be in NJ on October 28 & 29.

The **Greenspan Floortime International Conference** was held last October in Miami entitled "Dr. Greenspan's Vision: A Fully Integrated Program". Floortime Center directors, Jake Greenspan and Tim Bleecker presented The Greenspan Floortime Approach® and the Learning Tree Model and how to incorporate it into all facets of a child's program.

The Rebecca School and ICDL held their **annual conference** in Manhattan in March called "Let's Dance: Play and Joy through Collaboration in the DIR/Floortime Approach" where presenters from the Rebecca School, the self-advocacy and ICDL community presented how following a student's passion can both build a strong relationship and accomplish discipline specific goals.

## Advocacy Efforts

With the disappointing announcement of the new **Ontario Autism Program** providing funding only for behavioural services and leaving thousands of families on the wait list for up to two years, **developmental approach advocates** and **self-advocates** began to pressure the government about providing more options for families. Early meetings have begun and the government has said that they are open to hearing about other options going forward.

On January 29<sup>th</sup> the **DIR Coalition of California**'s bill passed the Senate! This bill allows coverage for all evidence-based, doctor-prescribed approaches to autism treatment. It is a first step that we hope to replicate here in Ontario.

## Affect Autism Podcasts

All of **Affect Autism**'s podcasts are now available on iTunes, Google Play, and Feedburner. They cover a range of topics, interviewing DIR Expert Training Leaders about applications and implementation of DIR/Floortime.

**Have an idea for our next newsletter? Let us know!**